

# *Report* Kalaupapa National Historic Park

## ■ 1.0 Site Description

The Kalaupapa National Historic Park (NHP) is located on the north shore of the island of Moloka'i, Hawaii (see Figure 1). It contains the Kalaupapa Peninsula, where the community of Kalaupapa and the original community of Kalawao (which was abandoned in 1931) are located, adjacent cliffs and valleys, and submerged lands and water out to one-quarter mile from shore. It also includes an overlook area in Pala'au State Park on a cliff above the peninsula. The park contains approximately 10,000 acres, 8,000 of which is land and 2,000 of which is water. The park is administered jointly by the NPS and several state agencies including the Hawaii Department of Health and the Division of Land and Natural Resources. Ownership of the park is also split between the NPS, which owns 23 acres, and various state agencies, which own the remaining acreage.

**Figure 1. Island of Moloka'i**



The community of Kalaupapa, with approximately 120 residents, is the location of the Kalaupapa Leprosy Settlement. The settlement is home for about 50 former Hansen's disease (leprosy) patients and workers in the associated medical facilities. There is no vehicular access to the Kalaupapa Peninsula. Access to the peninsula is limited to mule rides or hiking on a three-mile long trail along the cliffs that descend 1,600 feet to the

peninsula, by commercial or charter air flights by airplane or helicopter to a small airstrip at the northern edge of the peninsula, or by private boat. Most of the flights into Kalaupapa originate on Oahu or Maui and stop first at the main airport in the center of the island. The community has just lost the service of its largest air carrier Island Air, which had provided twice daily flights with 18-seat aircraft.

One of the purposes of the park is to protect the lifestyle and individual privacy of the patients in the settlement, so visitation to the settlement is restricted to 100 visitors a day. All visitors to the park must receive a permit from the Department of Health to enter the Kalaupapa settlement. The park receives approximately 76,000 visitors each year, approximately 10,000 of whom visit the settlement. It is too early to determine the impact on visitation the cessation of flights by Island Air will have. However, the impact is being partially offset by the addition of flights by other carriers. Visitors to the peninsula typically stay between three and four hours. Visitors to the overlook area, where interpretive signs and exhibits are located, typically stay a maximum of one hour. The parking lot at the overlook site, which is managed by the State Parks Department, has not been at capacity. Visitation is fairly constant throughout the year.

Visitors may tour the Kalaupapa and Kalawao settlements on a commercial tour. The NPS does not offer any regularly scheduled interpretive programs or activities because of the restricted nature of visitation to the park, and because tours are available through a commercial service.

The Kalaupapa Leprosy Settlement is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a national historic landmark. A section of the Kalaupapa park is included within the North Shore Cliffs National Natural Landmark.

The General Management Plan (GMP) for the park does not address the physical development of the park, and has no recommendations regarding transportation or transit. However, one issue related to access to and from the peninsula is the site's loss of a major air carrier, Island Air, who has not yet been replaced, in September 1999.

## ■ 2.0 Existing ATS

The park currently uses a tour bus system operated by a private company to transport visitors on the peninsula. The tour bus route runs once a day, six days a week. It stops to pick up visitors at the trail head, stops at the airport, tours the community and the site of the older Kalawao settlement, then returns to the trail head and the airport. The round trip bus route is approximately 10 or 11 miles, and carries approximately 30 riders per day. One or two of the buses have wheelchair lifts.

### ■ 3.0 ATS Needs

The park's needs are currently being met by its existing Alternative Transportation System (ATS) (with the exception of the need to fill the void left by the loss of the major air carrier for air transport to the peninsula.)

### ■ 4.0 Basis of ATS Needs

The park's needs are currently being met by its existing ATS.

### ■ 5.0 Bibliography

Kaluapapa National Historical Park. Internet site: <http://www.nps.gov/kala/>.  
Information printed November 1999.

### ■ 6.0 Persons Interviewed

Francis Kuailani Sr., Superintendent, telephone interview, November 1999